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AUTHOR Casanova, Ursula; Budd, Alice Trujillo
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ABSTRACT

Plans for an oral history project involving Hispanic academics are presented. Although the 1980s were heralded as the decade of the Hispanics, Chicanos and Puerto Ricans continued to be poorly represented in the academy, and in 1983 they comprised less than 2% of all full-time academic faculty in the United States. The project is designed to develop a qualitative database to help explain this underrepresentation. Twenty interviews with male and female Hispanic academics will be completed for the pilot portion of the study. This paper reports five interviews with two Chicanos and three Puerto Ricans. Preliminary research questions seek the answers to: personal and family characteristics and career patterns of Latinos who successfully gain participation in the academy; the most significant influences on their success; hindrances they have faced; and factors influencing their satisfaction at an institution of higher education. The interviews to date suggest several areas for deeper, more extensive analysis (e.g. the parental role in running interference during a child's school career, the interplay between language and school experiences as well as the role of language in developing an ethnic identity, the influence of "el movimiento" on the careers of Latinos, the role of peer support groups and possible gender differences, and the validity of the concept of an ethnic epiphany and its effect on the individual). (SM)

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ORAL HISTORIES OF LATINO ACADEMICS:

Work in Progress

By

Ursula Casanova and Alice Trujillo Budd

Arizona State University

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Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association in San Francisco, California, March, 1989.

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Oral Histories of Latino Academics

Introduction

The 1980's was heralded as the decade of the Hispanics. The popular media devoted much atention to this fact and predictions, both dire and encouraging, were made by all.[1] However, in spite of this expected demographic achievement, Chicanos & Puerto Ricans, the largest sub-groups within the Hispanic collectivity, continued to be poorly represented in the academy. In 1983, they comprised **less than 2%** of all full-time academic faculty in the United States.[2] This figure indicated severe underrepresentation of a group which, according to 1985 Census figures constitutes about 7% of the nation's population.

The work reported in this paper is an attempt at a better understanding of the problem. If rhetoric is any indication, it appears that the academic community is interested in improving the dismal record reported here. But adequate improvements will depend on our understanding of the inducements as well as the barriers that affect the educational careers of those Latinos who succeed in the academy.

Preliminary Literature Review

Participation.

Very little empirical research has been done on Hispanics in academe. In addition, most of what has been done is based on survey research and is usually limited to the Mexican American experience. In 1978 Carlos H. Arce wrote that the only national study of college faculty that had an acceptable ethnic category for Mexican origin persons was conducted in 1972-73 by Alan E. Bayer.[3] This study undertook the largest national, all-purpose survey of college and

university faculty ever conducted. Slightly over 1,500 faculty identified themselves as Mexican American/Chicano, not 1% of the total of those reported. In Bayer's narrative on his findings, he discussed the slow pace of affirmative action programs designed to increase the proportions of minorities and women on college and university faculties.[4]

In 1981-82 Adalberto Aguirre, Jr. conducted a survey of Chicano faculty at postsecondary educational institutions in the American Southwest (Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, Texas). Out of four hundred and twenty-four questionnaires mailed, only one hundred fifty-nine questionnaires were returned by persons who identified their ethnic background as Chicano/Mexican American. Thus the small response rate does not allow us to assume that the survey is representative of Chicano faculty.

Descriptive data for Chicano faculty activities within the postsecondary educational environment were also gathered by Aguirre. Respondents were asked to indicate their participation in the following activities: (1) teaching classes with a specific focus on the Chicano community, (2) service on university committees (i.e. affirmative action committee) or local community committees (i.e. Mexican American Chamber of Commerce) concerned with minority-specific issues, and (3) participation in institutional activities focused on the recruitment and retention of Chicano students. They showed that although many Chicano faculty participated in some type of minority-oriented service activity, differences in such participation were related to academic rank. Aguirre states that "there is a need to examine whether this is due to a different set of choices or to a different set of expectations by academic

rank. There is also a need to identify the expectations held by each type of institutional environment for Chicano faculty."[5]

In later work Aguirre found that there was a pattern of concentration of Chicano faculty in Chicano Studies and departments such as Spanish and Bilingual Education. He elaborated on his 1981-82 study and suggested "the presence of an organizational logic that sorts and channels Chicano faculty into a limited opportunity structure in academe." (p.80) Aguirre suggests that an autobiographical examination of the educational experiences of Chicano faculty may shed some light on those features in their background that interact with the school in a successful manner.[6]

The limited literature on Latino academics includes Representation of Minorities in Higher Education in the West by the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education,[7] and The Condition of Education for Hispanic Americans by the National Center for Educational Statistics,[8] both dating from 1980. The Western Interstate study showed that while Hispanics constituted the largest minority group in thirteen western states, they were the most underrepresented group in higher education. And Michael A. Olivas, writing in the N.C.E.S. study, said that despite the demographers' declaration that Hispanics are the fastest growing minority group in the United States, Hispanics still account for only 1.4 percent of the faculty members in the U. S. More recently, the American Council on Education's Minorities in Higher Education Annual Status Report of 1986 emphasized that between 1980 and 1984, Hispanic enrollment increased at both undergraduate and graduate levels, however Hispanics remained underrepresented at institutions of higher

education (IHE) and concentrated at two-year institutions. The report also noted that at the doctoral level, between 1975 and 1984, Hispanics made gains but were still seriously underrepresented.

Patricia Gandara, another researcher working in this area, has noted that the Ph. D., which is the generally acknowledged educational requirement for entry into most university teaching positions, is seldom pursued or attained by Chicanos. Only 2.9 percent of all doctoral degrees were awarded to "Hispanics" in 1982 in California.[9] In an exploratory study focused on autobiographical experiences of Chicano faculty, Gandara lists four motivating factors identified by respondents: (a) a translation of the parental work ethic into their school work; (b) attending highly integrated schools; (c) influence of a role model; and (d) a strong bicultural self identification.[10]

Strategies for Increasing Participation.

The low participation of Latinos in higher education has not gone unnoticed by academic institutions and has led some to inititate strategies designed to increase their numbers. One strategy that is often mentioned in this regard is mentoring, that is, the sponsoring of younger faculty by their more senior colleagues.

Mentoring relationships were surveyed by Kathryn M. Moore. She conducted a series of intensive interviews with college and university administrators and found that mentoring relationships seemed to fare better when formed between people who shared a common bond. Unfortunately, due to the discrepancies in their representation, this creates a special problem for minorities and women in higher education since "Groups in which most of the members share a common bond are not likely to accept persons who do not share

similarities. Minority group members and women may have particular difficulties in being selected as proteges. Once selected, they may be subjected to additional stresses."[11] (p. 25)

Writing on mentoring, Collins suggests that the relative benefits and costs of mentoring and networking for minorities have yet to be compared. Serious attention should be brought to the potential costs that mentoring relationships exact on women and minority proteges. "In addition to socializing proteges to the rules of the game, mentors also guide proteges toward fruitful activities by imparting the intellectual legacy of their academic discipline. When the intellectual legacy is perceived as incompatible with one's group and self-interests, a problem may arise."[12]

Recruitment.

In 1987 the American council on education asked states for information about their efforts to recruit minority faculty. They received responses from only 26 states and found that the most frequently cited methods used to recruit minorities were: (a) high school and junior high outreach programs; (b) Talent Search or Upward Bound programs; and c) Special training for and coordination with counselors in high schools and at two-year institutions.

Reasons for Underrepresentation.

The reasons for the severe underrepresentation of Latinos in higher education are not clear but the 1986 report of the American Council on Education provides a hint. It reports that low income students had more financial difficulty enrolling in college in 1985 than in 1978 due to lowered family income, higher tuition costs, and reductions in federal student aid.[13]

The impact of financial need appears to continue since in their 1987 report the same organization documents the continued decline in Hispanic higher education participation rates since 1976, even though their high school completion rates have increased significantly. The report also notes that in the academic year 1985, despite increases in degree attainment at every level, Hispanics continued to earn degrees in numbers well below their proportion in the total population.[14]

Characteristics.

Some efforts have also been made to identify the salient characteristics of Latinos who do make it into the hallowed halls of academia. Most notable among these was the National Latino Faculty Survey conducted by Garza in 1987 and reported in 1988 by Garza and Cohen in an unpublished position paper prepared for the American Educational Research Association. Two hundred and thirty-four respondents participated in this examination of the participation of Hispanic minorities in the U.S. professoriate.[15]

Chicanos and Puerto Ricans are more likely to depend on federal and national fellowship moneys for support during their doctoral studies. An important factor that must have affected access when decreases during the last decade in those funding areas are considered. However, perhaps in confirmation of Moore's research on mentoring, in comparison with white students, Hispanics are much less likely to receive teaching and research assistantships. According to data cited by Garza from the National Research Council 1985 Report, 87% of white non-hispanics, but only 67% of Chicanos and Puerto Ricans, receive that source of support.

The difference between Hispanic and other faculty does not appear so great when we look only at the tenured faculty. In 1983 fifty-five percent of the full-time professors in the United States were tenured, as were also 55% of similarly ranked Hispanic faculty. However, only 1.4% of all Full-time tenured faculty in the United States was classified as Hispanic. This suggests then that the problem is more one of hiring and perhaps retention at the institution, than it is one of competence among those selected.

These writers reported absolute numbers of Hispanic faculty at 8,455 among a total of 486,738 full time faculty in the United States. They also confirmed previous reports indicating that on a comparative representation Hispanics are the least represented of all minority groups in the U.S. professoriate. They also found that Latinos are more likely to be assistant professors or lecturers, and that the Hispanic faculty presence is heavily concentrated in the lower prestige universities and state colleges, rather than at the more prestigious schools. For example, they are more strongly represented in two-year colleges than in four-year institutions. The significance of this information lies in the difference between these two types of institutions. At the higher prestige universities research and publication constitute the major criterion for promotion and salary increments. Faculty in these settings are provided with release time for these activities. However, at the two-year colleges, and at many of the smaller state institutions, teaching responsibilities provide little time or administrative support for those scholarly endeavors. Given the likelihood of their assignment to the latter sites, Latinos may be excluded from traditional avenues toward academic success.

Latinos may also differ in their research interests. Responses to the Garza survey indicated that although most minority faculty report they are involved in basic research (89%), over half also report participation in research exclusively or primarily related to their own ethnic group in the areas of education and the behavioral and social sciences. However, it appears that their interests are not well supported. A full 85.6 percent of faculty surveyed by Garza felt that research on their own minority group is rated as being low quality or that such research is rated more highly when Anglos do it.

Garza's survey provides insight into the situation encountered by Latinos as pioneers in their institutions. For example, Hispanic faculty report that they find themselves in relative isolation. At the high prestige universities, over two-thirds of those responding stated that they were the only Hispanic in their department, while one third of the respondents located at universities considered to be of lower prestige reported being the only Hispanic in the department.[16]

These academics also perceive inequities in treatment. Three out of every four (73 percent) of Chicano and Puerto Rican faculty combined felt they have greater demands made on their time than do their 'Anglo' colleagues. These perceptions are supported by psychology department chair-persons who see "Too much minority service" as the number one obstacle to minorities receiving tenure.(p. 82)

In their conclusions Garza and Cohen call for more research on education for minorities and recommend that. "The American Educational Research Association, working with the Standing Committee on the Role of Minorities, develop a program for informing and sensitizing university presidents, deans, and faculty to the scholarly

topics and perspectives of minorities; and on how affirmative action, particularly the development, recruitment, and support of minority faculty is important to the overall academic enterprise generally, and to institutional and departmental goals, particularly." (pp. 38-39)

Other issues.

Although the research literature in the area of Hispanics in academe is extremely limited, many authors have raised other relevant issues that need to be examined. In 1974 Richard Rodriguez, in his "Going Home Again - The New American Scholarship Boy" asked that the question about the cultural costs of education not be delayed any longer. In his poignant story he raises questions about his own inner struggles concerning language and alienation of both family and community in exchange for education and social mobility. He noted that historically, the mid-1960s "Third World Movement" made all minority students representatives of larger groups of people and thus "It became harder to believe that my success had anything to do with my intellectual performance." [17]

Escobedo [18] points out that publication in journals and participation in professional organizations is the most adequate means of achieving visibility of academics and dissemination of information about minority concerns. However, traditional journals and organizations have not adequately provided for presentation of issues of concern to Hispanics. She also notes the influences of family expectations and early life experiences; the lack of resources for those of lower socioeconomic status with corresponding lesser family income; lower parent education and employment in menial jobs; limited experience as graduates working with other academicians; few

established mentors; lack of active sponsorship and supportive networks; and lack of short-term training related to special topics such as publication and proposal writing skills.

In his paper, Chicanos In Higher Education, Arce draws a sketchy portrait of Chicano college students and suggests some interesting patterns for entering Chicano students. He found they have usually attended a college closer to home, seemed more conservative than their Black counterparts, and reported lower educational aspirations. Arce stated that few attempts to empirically examine the characteristics and the experiences of Chicano college students have been made and these few have limited generalizability due to their focus on single campuses, and limited, imprecise sampling.[19]

All of these authors agree that extended research is necessary to better ascertain patterns of family and educational background which influence Hispanics' decision to enter the academy, and patterns in the career paths of Hispanic faculty members.

The Present Study

This study follows recommendations by Gandara,[20] Arce,[21] and others, for research that would examine the personal and career patterns of scuccessful Latino academics. Through quantitative research methods we have acquired a useful anatomy of the Hispanic presence in the academy.[22] A comparable set of qualitative data is needed to complement it. For this study oral history was selected as the most appropriate method for that purpose.

Oral history has been used to provide an 'insider's view' of historical processes in combination with corresponding quantitative measures. Gamio's early work on Mexican immigration, for example, relied on oral histories to add depth and personal detail to socio-economic analyses of migration patterns. The personal statements of participants bring the statistics to life and provide a better understanding of their experience.[23]

In a literature review of the oral history method, Cabrera and Howard discuss the usefulness of the method in women studies. They note that those who study phenomena of social stratification have found that many methods used in the social sciences obscure women's experiences because sociological surveys, and strict interview schedules are too often based on assumptions reflecting male experience and world view. In contrast, the use of more flexible interview formats allows women an opportunity to direct the interview process.[24] A similar argument can be sustained in the case of minority populations. We argue that to acquire an in-depth understanding of the specific problems and concerns faced by Hispanics as students and faculty it is necessary to allow those who are experiencing the situation to speak for themselves.

Within these oral histories we expect to identify patterns in the family and educational backgrounds of Latino academics which influence their decision to enter the academy. We will then examine their developmental process and identify the particularities of their academic experience-- the tenure procedure, academic and teaching responsibilities, and research endeavors. Our purpose is to develop a qualitative data base that helps to explain, in all its complexity, the

dismal representation of Latinos among the academic community. Many writers have hinted at a uniqueness in the academic experience for Latinos. It is this uniqueness which we seek to uncover through oral histories.[25]

Twenty interviews with male and female Hispanic academics will eventually be completed for this pilot portion of the study. At this stage the selection is opportunistic rather than random. Through the initial analyses of these interviews we expect to identify themes and patterns that will enable us to prepare a final interview schedule and to establish guidelines for selecting an appropriate national sample for a planned second stage. Through the two-stage process we expect to first gain the advantage of an initial free-flowing, unencumbered interview that will, upon analysis, yield the issues that participants consider important. These issues will then form the core upon which we will construct a semi-structured instrument for the second stage interviews. In that stage we will give more attention to the problem of sampling, which has been mentioned as one of the weakest points in this type of research.[26] By disaggregating the first set of interviews we will be able to separate out the experiences of male and female participants, of different Hispanic sub-groups, and of different age cohorts. Analysis of these data will indicate appropriate parameters for the selection of the larger and final sample. For example, it is likely that those whose entry into graduate school coincided with the beneficent 70's will describe vastly different experiences from those who entered during the 80's.

Progress to Date.

At this stage of the research we have completed five interviews. Participants include two Chicanos and three Puerto Ricans, three of

them are female, and two are male. In age they range from 33 to 53, and they occupy a variety of positions in their respective academic settings. One is a full professor, another an associate, both of them male and tenured. The three females are all assistant professors, and all five are working in colleges of education.

Preliminary Research Questions.

Through this study we seek answers to questions such as:

-- What are the personal and family characteristics, and career patterns of Latinos who successfully gain participation in the academy?

-- What have been the most significant influences on their success?

-- What hindrances have they faced?

-- What are some of the factors that influence their satisfaction at an institution of higher education?

When this first stage is completed, answer to these questions are expected to contribute to current efforts to increase both the pool of Latinos with scholarly credentials, and their retention in the academic setting.

What follows is a preliminary analysis of this set of oral histories. We have attempted to identify decision points, such as the selection of a field of study or graduate institution, and significant experiences and influences, such as the availability of financial support and mentoring relationships, that helped to determine the career paths of these individuals. In addition, data on their experiences within the academy,

helps to illustrate the unique problems they face in their progress as scholars/teachers as well as the experiences that contribute to their satisfaction in the academic setting.

In spite of their small number, these interviews already suggest several patterns related to family experiences, academic career, and personal growth. From them we can begin to extract some idea of the questions we will want to ask, and the sample we will want to tap in the final study.

Parental Role

The five interviewees report vastly different experiences during their formative years. Two of them (Miguel and Isabel) grew up in relatively secure, majority Hispanic communities in the southwesternUnited States . Both of these individuals were also the firstborn in intact families with several siblings each. Another one (Maria Luisa) grew up in NYC and lost her father during the time she was completing her undergraduate work. The other two (Rudy and Sylvia) grew up in Puerto Rico and moved to the United States during adolescence. Both of them were affected by divorce, one before he began school, the other during high school.

In spite of their differences in upbringing, all of these individuals shared certain commonalities: they all speak admiringly of both their parents, and in all cases, their parents intervened actively and defensively in their school careeers. All of these parents believed their

children would succeed in school, even Rudy's parents, whose son was a chronic underachiever.

RUDY

Rudy was a reader at age three but never a willing student in school. While in the fourth grade in a public school in PUERTO RICAN, his parents decided to transfer him to a demanding and exclusive private school in order to place him in a stricter environment and to provide him with good instruction in English. For Rudy this meant a separation from his friends and his behavior did not improve, eventually he was kicked out of the school. Once again, however, his parents ensured his continuing progress by enrolling him in a school distant from home but guided by a principal who personally assured them that she would not put their child back in grade.

MIGUEL.

This type of defensive intervention was also demonstrated by Miguel's parents. He was already Spanish/English bilingual when he entered school, however, he was placed in a special class where Mexican children were supposed to learn English for one to three years before they were allowed to participate in the regular classes. For about six weeks, until her son was transferred to the regular class, Miguel's mother, herself fully bilingual, visited the school daily and pressured school officials.

MARIA LUISA.

Maria Luisa's parents also demonstrated this defensive parental intervention. In this case reacting against the school's unwillingness to give their daughter the opportunity to transfer to a different school and participate in a program for gifted children. Maria Luisa, acknowledged by her peers and teachers as the best student in her class, had taken a test along with her classmates. Several of them were transferred, but she was not. Her parents learned about this from other parents who were surprised at Maria Luisa's exclusion. When the school administrators refused to change her, her parents removed her from the school and placed her in a parochial school.

ISABEL

Isabel's parents intervened more indirectly but no less effectively, when Isabel had some problems in school. They moved to a different neighborhood, one predominantly Anglo, and thus expected to provide a better education.

SYLVIA.

An excellent student through the ninth grade, Sylvia was about to enter a large, impersonal public high school when her mother intervened. Using the influence of relatives, she was able to get her daughter admitted to a small, achievement oriented campus high school.

All the individuals interviewed credit their parents for much of their success although most of these parents did not receive much formal education. Their children point out the practical intelligence their parents exhibited in various roles. Rudy remembers his father's

willingness to provide him with books, even comic books, reasoning that instilling the love of reading was the important thing, taste would come later. Likewise, Sylvia's father bought her any book she wanted, including a whole collection of children's literature when she could not make up her mind and choose among them.

Isabel and Miguel both pointed out their respective fathers' success in the workplace and their ability to compete successfully among individuals with much more formal preparation. And Maria Luisa noted her father's ability to secure a position in the NYC police at a time when very few Puerto Rican's (or other minorities) held such positions.

These parents had high expectations for their children and also instilled in them pride in their heritage. Isabel remembers being punished by her mother for crying in front of the Anglo boys who repeatedly beat her up after school because she shouldn't "let them know they hurt you." Isabel, as the first-born, was continually reminded of the importance of her achievement, "You'd better not fail this family," while her father worked "like a burro" to ensure his children's education.

Sylvia and Miguel remember almost identical exhortations by their fathers when they an announced at home their intentions to become, respectively, a laboratory and an X-ray technician: "Why be **that** when you can be a doctor?, asked their fathers at very different times, in totally different locations but delivering identical messages.

Rudy's parents perhaps exhibited the greatest confidence in their expectations that, in spite of repeated failures, their son would eventually outgrow his rebelliousness towards school and achieve the potential they never doubted he had. Maria Luisa perhaps experienced the least overt encouragement. However, her parent's intervention on her behalf, and their willingness to finance parochial school education through high school, as well as their immediate acceptance of her plans for continued study, were also clear indications of their confidence.

Thus, these data so far appear to confirm common wisdom about the importance of parental expectations and support to academic success. But the support provided by these parents was not the passive acceptance usually expected by school authorities. These parents protected their children from educational harm through active blocking of the school's negative responses to their children. We might use a sports metaphor and suggest that these parents "ran interference". We can only speculate what might have happened had Miguel's parents not intervened and demanded a different placement for their son. Would he have reached his present position as Full Professor if he had been allowed to remain in the "special class?" And what might Maria Luisa's life be like had she remained at the crowded public school where she was already beginning to demonstrate the behavior of a bored student?

Language

Many decisions are required of parents as they bring their children up, and many of these may critically affect their children's

future. Latino parents (as well as the many other parents who speak a language other than English at home) face an additional decision, what to do about the home language. This is one of the claims to the uniqueness for the Latino academic experience. There was no problem for two of our participants. They grew up in Puerto Rico comfortable as Spanish speakers as well as benefitting from competent English instruction which allowed them comparatively easy access when they entered mainland schools.

Ironically, "the language problem" was not the problem of those arriving late in their school careeers in theUnited States, but of those who were born in this country. It was also not the problem of the students but the problem of the schools. These five sets of parents dealt with "the problem" in different ways.

Isabel's parents, both balanced bilinguals, and bi-literate, were told by the nuns, when she entered kindergarten, that they should not speak to her in Spanish anymore or they might risk making her retarded. In spite of their own linguistic success, Isabel's parents took the advice to heart and used only English in speaking to her. She continued to be exposed to Spanish through her extended family and neighborhood, but not in conversation with her parents. She suffered no detriment from this exposure, her performance in school placed her in the top reading group from the beginning. But at the end of a summer in a Spanish-speaking environment, her parents were again reminded by the school of the damage they might do to their daughter.

Miguel's parents, also bilingual, demonstrated an intuitive understanding of language development. For most of his childhood they lived in Spanish-speaking communities where they insisted on English at home. But when they moved to an English-speaking community, they insisted on Spanish at home. As a result, Miguel and his siblings are all bilingual. In spite of this achievement, as mentioned before, his parents had to fight for proper placement when he began school.

Maria Luisa's parents made their decision beforehand. She suspects that her father's problems as an immigrant led him to insist on English as the only language to be spoken at home. Unlike his siblings who changed their Spanish-sounding name to give it an Italian flavor, her father had retained the vernacular spelling, but he did not want his children to suffer from lack of English competence.

Language continued to affect the school life of these students. In high school Isabel was forbidden, as were all her Mexican-American classmates, from taking Spanish as a foreign language because they would present an unfair advantage to Anglo students. She studied Latin instead. And Miguel, who did take Spanish in high school, was forced, as were all students with Spanish surnames in his school, to begin with the third course, regardless of his lack of reading and writing skills.[27]

Sylvia, who arrived from Puerto Rico with well developed bilingual competency was nonetheless affected by the language problem in college. In the advanced Spanish class she was taught by a teacher who never gave A's to native speakers because they had an unfair

advantage over second-language learners. Simultaneously, her English literature professor graded down those students whom she perceived to be native speakers of another language.

Language then, appears to be a powerful and potentially negative component of the academic development of Latinos. Actual language competence seems to have played less of a role in these individual's lives than the expectations held by the school. These were manifested both at the outset of their school experience, and later. Interestingly, the language competence that labeled them as "disadvantaged" in kindergarten, became an academic advantage denied them in high school. Language may also have consequences beyond the strictly academic. Both Isabel and Maria Luisa explain how, at the university level, they found themselves separated from the comfort their ethnic group might have provided because of their lack of facility in the vernacular language.

Academic Careers

Several things stand out with respect to these individuals' academic careeers. One is the serendipitous nature of their decisions, secondly the influence of "el movimiento."

Serendipity. All but one of these former students attended IHE's that were convenient in terms of their geographical proximity, low cost, and comparably easy access. Isabel, the only one who, as an undergraduate, attended a distant and prestigious institution, had a cousin who was

already a graduate student there, and her role model. But when, as a National Merit Scholar, she was invited to apply to that institution, she did so more in response to the fact that her cousin would be nearby, than to her knowledge that the university was considered one of the top ten in the country. She remembers that her second choice was the local state university.

The other four interviewees attended nearby state, or in the case of the two New Yorkers, city universities. None of these individuals was aware of the status differences among institutions, or about the possible consequences their choice of institutions might have later in their careers. Of course, none of them harbored, at the beginning of their undergraduate work, any intentions to pursue graduate studies, nor did they have a clear idea about their choice of major. This lack of direction might have been minimized by skilled counseling, but none of them were ever provided that help. Only Miguel remembers a counselor who, after reviewing his high scores in language, science, and math, compared to his low scores in social studies, recommended that he become an X-ray technician and avoid working with people.

While none of these individuals began with the intention of pursuing graduate work, three of them did so. But once again, their decisions were not guided by informed assessment of the alternatives. Isabel continued at the same institution and was perhaps the one who most clearly understood her goals, possibly as a result of the scholarly environment of her small, elite university. Maria Luisa decided she wanted to continue because she became interested in learning more

about the topic that interested her, but her applications were random and not guided by an understanding of what differenct institutions might offer. In spite of a brilliant academic record she did not apply to any of the more prestigious institutions in the country. Miguel, similarly to Rudy, was approached by a recruiter and decided, with his "companeros" to apply, almost for the heck of it.

The apparent importance of peer influence on the two male participants, in contrast to more independent behavior on the part of the three females, will need to be explored further. In Rudy's case, an earlier group decision had already led him into the Army, and Miguel acknowledges that his buddies might have just as easily joined the Army if the option had been discussed.

Both Rudy and Miguel also seemed to be mmore affected, or more conscious of the effect of "el movimiento." According to Rudy, "going to school at the time was a political act." He had learned about politics through his experience in Vietnam. It had been his first opportunity, as an adult, to be a member of a group of Puerto Rican activists. His awakened consciousness seems to have experienced what we call the "ethnic epiphany."

Ethnic epiphany is, we believe, the moment at which an individual becomes consciously aware of his/her condition as "outsider." They might have had hints before, as for example, when Maria Luisa participated, for the first time, in a class taught by a politically active Puerto Rican professor who encouraged her to read and become

involved in social issues; or in the experiences of Miguel in "the little racist town" where he grew up. However, what is meant here by the ethnic epiphany is the instant at which those isolated instances become crystallized in a moment of sudden clarity. The dictionary defines "epiphany" as "a sudden manifestation or perception of the essential meaning or nature of something." This sudden perception is what Rudy describes, as does also Maria Luisa when she remembers her own ethnic epiphany.

Maria Luisa had already completed her doctorate and successfully worked for several years as a school psychologist. She was the equally successful director of a graduate program designed to prepare Latino school psychologists when the APA investigators came to visit. They were there to certify the program but by their questions they made it clear to Maria Luisa that her preparation was suspect, "doubtless she had taken advantage of the opportunities available for minorities...." And of course, the competence of the enrollees was likewise questioned. It was then that she realized that it didn't matter "you play by their rules" but you are never quite accepted.

Summary and Conclusions.

As mentioned at the outset, this is purely a tentative analysis based on minimal data. As expected, this early effort contributes to a better understanding of the problem and helps to guide us in formulating questions and making decisions about a later sample. At

this point we can identify several areas for deeper, as well as more extensive analysis:

-- The parent's role in running interference during their children's school career;
-- The interplay between language and school experiences as well as the role of language in developing an ethnic identity;
-- The influence of "el movimiento" on the careers of Latinos;
-- The role of peer support groups and possible gender differences;
-- The validity of the concept of an "ethnic epiphany" and its effect on the individual.

These lines of inquiry also suggest characteristics for the sample. The importance of including both male and female, as well as Latinos from various sub-groups was recognized at the outset. We will also stress the importance of age cohorts, particularly for understanding the role of "el movimiento" on Latino careers. In addition, we think it necessary to extend our sample to include Latinos in various disciplines. Our participants so far are all members of education faculties, though they vary in their areas of expertise. Although education has been a preferred field of entry for latinos, we also need to gain a better understanding of the experience of Latinos in other areas where they might be more isolated, or perhaps receive more support because of their uniqueness.

We continue to believe that the study is significant in its potential to shed light on the difficult problems of recruitment, attrition and

retention of Chicanos & Puerto Ricans in the academic community. As we have seen, preliminary findings suggest that the career path and academic experiences of Latinos differ at least in some ways from those of the Anglo population. As for example, in the salience of the "language problem" and the specific role played by parents.

As is well-known, the Hispanic community occupies a rather low rung in the socio-economic hierarchy of the United States. It appears that this fact, combines with the limited number of Hispanics with advanced educational preparation and professional experiences, to create unique pressures on those who manage to succeed. Within this social configuration Hispanic academics occupy a rather priviledged position in their communities. This priviledged position places a burden of social responsibilities on those individuals who "make-it." Thus it is important to increase the pool of people who can share these burdens. An increased pool is also likely to increase the availability of mentors who can contribute to and extend the opportunities now available to Latinos.

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[1]See Newsweek, -----, and Time, -----.

[2]1983 US Equal Oppty Comm, T.3; 1983 NRC Summary Rept. T.5 (excludes prof degrees); 1984 US ED, NCES, Fall enrollment in colleges & Univ, 1984 Survey, table prep 9/86.

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[25]See, for example, Gandara,1986; Arce, 19--; Garza & Cohen, 1988.

[26]Cabrera & Howard (1988). Oral history project...

[27]The third course in a foreign language sequence deals typically with Spanish literature and written expression. An unschooled native speaker in an english language environment is unlikely to have acquired a literary vocabulary or the grammatical undersatnding necessary for college level writing.